



The Gathering Tank

Volume 17, Issue 2 July 2012

Robyn Pearl, Editor

A Newsletter of the New Hampshire Maple Producers Association, Inc.



This year's summer meeting will be held at Windswept Maples in Loudon, home of Larry and Melissa Moore. The meeting will be held on Saturday, July 21st at 9:00 am.

Our keynote speaker for the meeting will be Timothy Wilmot from the Proctor Maple Research Institute at the University of Vermont. He will be speaking about his research on creating vacuum on gravity systems.

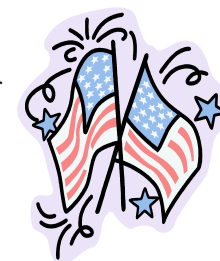
We also will be hearing from Steve Roberge from the UNH Extension Service and Eric Johnson about the joint venture between the NHMPA and the Extension Service in creating Maple Schools to be held in New Hampshire. The intent is to offer education to members here in our own state. Multiple classes will be held to offer a variety of subject matter appropriate for sugar makers of all levels. They are planned to be held in the fall so not to conflict with the existing schools in other states. More details on the schools will be posted on our website as information becomes available. Come prepared with suggestions for school topics. You probably aren't the only one wanting to know more about a certain subject.

The full agenda and the lunch schedule is on page 6. This year's lunch will be a Pot Luck Picnic. Please refer to the list as to what we would like you to bring.

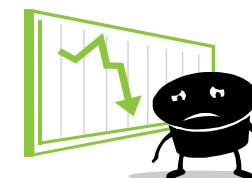
As you may or may not have heard, the Carlisle competition will be handled differently this year. More details on the new rules structure can be found on page 3.

If you have syrup you wish to send overseas to the troops, please bring that along as well. Half pint size works best. Bill Eva will be sending them along with our appreciation for their service.

See you soon in Loudon!!



2012 Maple Crop Yields Below Average



Sugar makers were all hoping for a repeat of the record setting season of 2011, but were sadly disappointed. Unseasonable temperatures started sap to flow up to two weeks ahead of the average timing. Coupled with a week long warm spell causing buds to break made for a challenging and frustratingly short season for many.

Tapping and boiling were pushed ahead up to 14 days for some producers due to the warmth. The earliest reported boil in the southern part of the state was on February 7th.

Many producers ended the season around March 19th due to the warm week and bud development that occurred causing ropey sap. Those in the northern part of the state whose trees had lesser developed buds were better able to withstand the heat and continued to collect and boil without much effect. The latest reported boil was on April 7th.

The majority of the syrup made was in the medium to dark amber grades, but a fair amount of light was produced, and many producers reported making B and commercial grade.

Members reported crop yields ranging from 25-85% of an average crop, but with most settling in the 50-65% range.

Overall, the season ran 7-10 days early in its start and finish, with a lower production than anticipated due to the warmth. Producers had a sufficient crop to provide syrup to their regular markets, but excess is not widely available.

Thank you to everyone who reported in with their season's results. They are of great value to me and help the other producing states to understand and compare their results with ours.

New Hampshire Maple Producers Assoc.
409 Loudon Ridge Road
Loudon, NH 03307

(Fair continued)

Light amber syrup is needed for sale at the fairs. It will be purchased for \$3.25/lb. and must be in a minimum 15 gallon container. All syrup will be inspected prior to canning. This year, canning will be at Sunnyside Maples in Loudon. If you are able to help or have questions, please call Paul Messer at 353-4883 or email him at sundaymtmaples@myfairpoint.com.

Excess syrup from the fairs will be available for purchase. Check the website in October for a list of products and sizes. Products sell quickly, so keep checking in on what is available.

The NHMPA has a long history of involvement with the fairs. Consider being a part of that history. If you have never visited the Big E, you should. It is a blend of an agricultural fair, a carnival, and lots of commercial displays, but plenty of food and fun for all.

Did you know? The buildings on the Avenue of States at the Big E are all modeled after the State House of its respective state and the land it sits on is also owned by that state. When you step onto the grounds of the New Hampshire building, you are back home again!

(Inspection continued)

These are the types of questions that an inspector may ask. An inspector wants you to be able to demonstrate that you follow good management practices (GMP). This includes cleanliness of equipment and production and storage buildings, production records and date codes on containers if a recall is required, food grade containers and equipment, knowing who supplies you with your equipment, supplies and containers, calibrating your thermometers and hydrometers and the list goes on. If an inspector finds a serious issue, your operation will be reported to state inspectors and you could be in jeopardy of being closed down until the proper requirements are met.

I am planning to have brochures and information from the FDA available at the summer meeting. More information on this topic is available on our website including links to the various agencies and information that you will find helpful to assess your sugar house.

There is no way of knowing when the next inspection will be or where it will occur. It's best to be prepared and give yourself peace of mind that if you are chosen, you will be successful in the outcome.

President's Corner

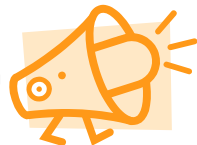
It certainly was a mild winter and although I enjoyed a smaller heating bill than normal, I did not imagine that the sugaring season would turn out like it did. It was one for the record books for sure! But as NH sugar makers, we will make the best of it and await another sugaring season and hope that it is better than the last one. There are many new innovations headed to the maple industry with advancements in tubing, spouts, evaporators and RO's. Where we all fit in to this new technology will be dictated by the size of the operation and our willingness to jump right into using it.

I was asked by Paul Weeks of Campton if we could compile a list of all of the Carlisle winners back to the beginning of the award. I know that these are recorded somewhere, but over time the list seems to be in more than one place. I would like if the membership can help to gather this information. I would also like a list of all the past directors and board members reaching back as far as we can. Let's not forget why this association was started and who helped to get it to where it is today.

Thanks,

Bodie Peters

PUBLICITY REPORT



Although not a great year for making syrup, great interest was taken by the press in wanting to know how the weather affected the season. A tremendous amount of media attention was received including from many local newspapers, WMUR, WBZ radio in Boston, CBS Evening News, The Wall Street Journal office in Quebec, several live interviews on The Weather Channel, and most recently Accuweather wanting a follow up on the season. The mild weather caught the attention of many wanting to know how we all would make out.

We had a very successful tree tapping ceremony at Fadden's Sugar House in Woodstock. Gov. and Dr. Lynch both very much enjoyed their last official event, and expressed their appreciation to the industry for its importance to the state as well as offered their continued support to our association.

I hope you all had a good turnout for Maple Weekend. I know the warm weather was not exactly helpful, but the public still wanted to come out for the experience. I didn't know quite what to do without the rain or the evaporator running...

- Robyn Pearl

Secretary's Notes

Our membership as of June 15 is 384 members as compared with 391 last year at this time with a total of 410 by the end of the year. There are still a number of members who have not paid their 2012 dues. Our dues are set for the calendar year (Jan-Dec); it is important to have them paid by March 31, for the privilege of purchasing association jugs and have your subscription to Maple Digest renewed. Anyone who has not paid in time for the subscription renewal will miss a copy of the Digest. The next Digest deadline is September 1st.

We are pleased to have 3 candidates for the Felker Award, which will be judged for the summer meeting.

Barbara and I look forward to seeing you at the Summer meeting; July 21 at Larry and Melissa Moore's Windswept Farm in Loudon. Bring your camera. You'll see great views on Loudon Ridge.

- Don Lassonde

NHMPA

CONTACTS



President: Bodie Peters, Sugar Hill, 823-7708

Vice Pres: Tim Robinson, Chocorua, 323-9320

Secretary: Don Lassonde, Warner, 456-6052

Treasurer: Howard Pearl, Loudon, 435-6587

Directors: Bill Eva, Hancock, 525-3566

Ben Fiske, Temple, 562-6595

Hank Kenney, Marlborough, 876-3838

Paul Messer, Sr., Orford, 353-4883

Mike Moore, Canterbury, 783-0321

Hank Peterson, Londonderry, 432-8427

Dave Scanlan, Bow, 228-4449

Peter Thomson, Orford, 353-4111

Container Chairman: Bill Cheney, 726-3829

Big E Manager: Dee Linn, 359-1270

2013 SUGAR HOUSE TOUR GUIDE



It's time once again to plan our Sugar House Tour Guide: **New Hampshire Maple Sugar Houses Welcome Visitors**. The brochure had a new look this year utilizing brightly colored maple leaves on the cover and amber topic headlines. It featured a list of sugar houses broken out by county, a state map with county lines and numbered key for reference, a brief history of maple production, pictures, and other helpful information about maple and maple products.

Last year, 11,000 copies were printed. All were distributed prior to the sugaring season and throughout the year to highway rest areas, chambers of commerce and other strategic locations, including fairs, expos, educational forums, etc., and to individuals requesting them.

This is a great opportunity to get your sugar house advertised year round for thousands to see, and for a low cost. The more listings we have, the more effective the brochure is. We had an almost capacity listing last year, so if we have even more members choosing to participate, we may switch to a booklet format that would be the same size but feature counties on their own pages.

This service is provided only to current paid members of the NHMPA. If you would like to be listed in the brochure, please send a \$30.00 check made out to NHMPA to:

Robyn Pearl, 409 Loudon Ridge Road, Loudon, NH 03307.

WE MUST RECEIVE YOUR APPLICATION BY SEPTEMBER 15, 2012

Name _____ County _____

Sugarhouse Name _____

Mailing Address _____

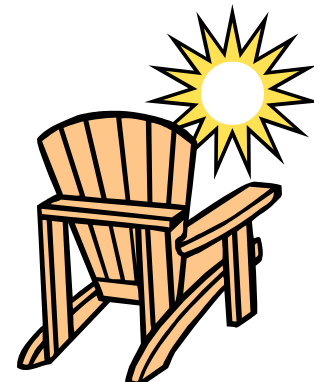
Physical Address of Sugar house _____

Phone _____ Email/website _____

Same description as last year? Yes ___ If not, please give a **brief** description of what you offer: (i.e. pancake breakfast, mail order, etc.). This is a **year round** listing, **not** for Maple Weekend. If the description is too long, it will be edited to fit.

SUMMER MEETING AGENDA

WHEN: Saturday, July 21, 2012
WHERE: Windswept Maples, Loudon, NH
TIME: 9:00-10 a.m. - Coffee & Pastries



- 10:00 – Welcome by Larry and Melissa Moore
- 10:15 – Noon - Business Meeting
 - Officers' and Directors' Reports
 - Carlisle Competition Changes
 - Insurance Program against ALB - Chris Pheil
 - Initiation of Maple Schools in New Hampshire - Steve Roberge, UNH Extension Service and Eric Johnson
 - Felker Award
- 12 noon – Pot Luck Alphabet Picnic (see note below)
 - 1:00 – Key Note Speaker - Timothy Wilmot, Proctor Maple Research Center, UVM
 - Topic: Research on Producing Vacuum on Gravity Systems
 - Tour of Windswept Maples sugar bush and facilities
 - 3:00 - Adjournment

Lunch Note: Whichever letter your last name begins with, please bring that item:

- AB** - Dessert: cake, cookies, brownies, etc.
- CDEFG** - Sandwich filling: Luncheon meat, sliced cheese, etc.
- HIJK** - Bread, rolls
- LMN** - Vegetable salad, potato chips, pretzels, etc.
- OPQRST** – Potato salad, casserole, baked beans, etc.
- UVWXYZ** – Fruit salad, fruit



Directions to Windswept Maples:

From Route 93S: Take Exit 20 (Tilton - follow signs to Speedway) Follow Route 140 through Belmont to Route 106S. Stay on Route 106 for approximately 6 miles to Loudon Ridge Road on the left. Windswept Maples is the first farm on the right.

From Route 93N: Take Exit 15E (Route 393) and get off at Exit 3. Take a left and follow Route 106N for approximately 10 miles. (You will pass in front of the Speedway). Loudon Ridge Road is on the right. Windswept Maples is the first farm on the right.



Carlisle Award Rules Change for the 2013 Competition

The Board of Directors and Officers of the NHMPA have found it necessary to change the way that the Carlisle Award is to be qualified for and judged. The decision has been made that entries for the Carlisle will have no longer have a connection to the state fairs and all of the judging will be held at our own Summer and Annual meetings.

The Lawrence A. Carlisle Memorial Trophy is awarded annually by the NHMPA for excellence in production of maple syrup. This award is made in recognition of the outstanding service and devotion of Lawrence A. Carlisle to the welfare and development of the Maple Industry of New Hampshire.

All members in good standing will be allowed to submit one entry per sugar house. Entries must be submitted in a 2# unmarked honey jar and brought to a board member who will deliver them to the judging ahead of the Summer Meeting. An entry form must accompany all submissions. The form is available on our website or from a board member. **Deadline for entry is July 15**, so please contact your nearest board member to get your syrup to them in time.

Judging for the preliminary round will be conducted by one member of the NH Dept. of Ag and two NHMPA members that are not participating in the contest. There will be three finalists from each county that will be announced at the Summer meeting. No monetary awards will be given at the preliminary level.

Samples can be retrieved at the Summer meeting. Otherwise, you will need to make arrangements with the board member with whom you submitted your entry to pick it up from them.



The complete rules for the Carlisle Award are posted on our website. We will also be discussing them at Summer meeting.

Remember, there is no longer a requirement to enter for the Carlisle Award at the fairs. The NHMPA continues to encourage the exhibition of fine quality maple products at agricultural fairs and to assist on expansion and establishment of maple departments at all fairs.

We would love to hear how you place at the fairs as well, so please write in. Good luck !!!



IMSI REPORT

An IMSI Directors' meeting was held in Croghan, NY on May 18, 2012. It was very well attended. Crop reports were given offering various results on the season which mainly depended on the location. Ohio and most western states and western Quebec had poor yields. Very good yields were reported in eastern Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Maine. New Hampshire reported 3/4 of a crop. A preliminary crop report has not yet been provided by Quebec but indications are the supply of syrup will meet demand due in part to the existing 30 million pound reserve. This comment implies that it was not a prolific year as they are relying on reserves to make up the difference.

Adulteration testing is ongoing. IMSI is looking for a new lab to do the testing. Anyone who thinks they may have a question about adulterated syrup should contact the IMSI or NH Dept. of Ag.

The new grading system is moving along. The Canadian Senate passed a motion to support the grades and nomenclature. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency is working on an amendment to their regulations. The USDA has completed its first review. New York has begun drafting the regulation. Ohio is waiting for the USDA to move forward. Vermont, Maine and New Hampshire are committed to the grade amendments. A sample of the new cap label was demonstrated. Reviewers recommended that the color be lightened so the words are more legible.

Nutritional rack cards and posters are now available. They should be available for distribution at the Summer Meeting. We have the ability to print quantities as needed.

The Organic committee is working on consolidating background information from the US and Canada.

The annual meeting of the NAMSC and the IMSI will be held on October 22-25, 2012 at the Mystic Marriot Hotel in Mystic, CT. If you are interested in attending, it is recommended that you make your hotel reservations soon as they will book quickly. Registration forms and additional information for the meeting will be available on our website in early July.

-Hank Peterson, Delegate





Homestead Kitchen Licensing a Must

Do you make candies, confections, and other goods from your maple syrup? Did you know that in order to legally sell these products, you must have a

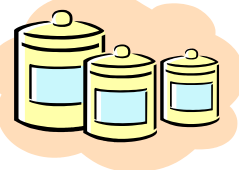
Homestead License? The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) mandates that all food products created in a residential kitchen must be labeled as such to consumers as part of the NH Rules for the Sanitary Production and Distribution of Food. Many states do not allow home food production due to the danger from improper preparation methods or unsanitary conditions in the kitchen. New Hampshire does allow homestead kitchens under certain circumstances.

Production and sale of the following items fall under the requirement of a homestead license: Baked items, including but not limited to, breads, rolls, muffins, cookies, brownies, and cakes, double crust fruit pies, candy and fudge, packaged dry products, including but not limited to, herbs and spices, acid foods, including but not limited to, mustards and vinegars, and jams and jellies.

There are two levels for the license; Level One allows for sales at farmer's markets, farm stands and residences. Level Two allows sales at the same locations as Level One and also allows for sales at retail food stores. Both levels require a completed application including a water test if you are not on a town water supply and a kitchen inspection performed by a DHHS agent. The application can be found on the web on the DHHS website (you need to go to the Food Protection page and look for Homestead Kitchens.) A link has been posted on our website as well. An annual fee of \$50 is required for the Level One certificate. Level Two is a \$225 annual fee.

The application requires you to be quite complete in disclosing what food items you will be providing and the preparation methods for "jarred" foods such as jams, jellies, sauces, etc.

I encourage all of you who do sell maple goods other than syrup to certify your kitchen for your own protection. It's best to know what is required of you, and if there was an incident stemming from your sugar house, you have documentation of your practices. I plan to submit my application, and the entire process takes about 6 weeks to complete. Consider doing the same while you have time out of sugaring season so you will be certified by next spring.



Website Updates

I hope you are all enjoying the new format of our website. We have been working hard to make it accessible to both the membership and to the public. Please let me know what you think! Email me at nhmpa@aol.com with your comments.



The site is being updated regularly with the latest information that affects you and your sugaring operation.

Features that can be found on the site are:

- ⇒ A **calendar** of events in a monthly format that will indicate upcoming meetings, schools, fairs, etc.
- ⇒ **All forms and applications** (membership, sugar house tour guide, Maple Weekend, etc.)
- ⇒ **PayPal** is now available for those who prefer to pay dues, participation fees, etc. electronically.
- ⇒ **Classifieds** - do you have equipment to sell or would like to buy? How about syrup or added value products? It's a free and easy service to get your needs sent out to the community. Email nhmpa@aol.com with your listing to get it posted.
- ⇒ The **Members Only** section contains information that is sensitive to the organization but is pertinent to members (board meeting minutes, association financial reports, etc.) thus the reason it is password protected. Please email me at nhmpa@aol.com to get the username and password to gain access.

Let me know what else you would find helpful on the site, and thanks in advance for the input!!



Interested in Making a Difference?

Would you like to be a part of the decision making process of the NHMPA? Do you have ideas that you would like to share to help progress the association? Are you interested in becoming a member of the board of directors or an officer of the association? All members are welcome to attend the board meetings that occur approximately 4-5 times a year. Meeting dates and times can be found on the calendar on our website. Attend a meeting and consider getting involved in the future of this industry. Your ideas may be the catalyst to something great!

Odds & Ends

- ◆ Please remember to bring your membership card with you when you are purchasing Association jugs. Can dealers will be verifying your dues are current before making the sale. Association containers are to be used solely by members.
- ◆ An IMSI Maple Grading School will be held on October 26-27 at the Windham County Extension Office in Connecticut following the IMSI meeting. Registration information and forms can be found on our website, www.nhmapleproducers.com.
- ◆ Consider sharing your web address with us if you have one. Many times there is information that we would like to get out quickly and this is the easiest, most efficient and cost effective way for us to communicate. We do not share our member list.
- ◆ Share news, photos and other fun items with us! Send them to nhmpa@aol.com.
- ◆ If you are interested in hosting a Tree Tapping Ceremony or a Summer Meeting, let us know. Send an email with your location and we will review with you what's involved.

LET'S GO TO THE FAIR!

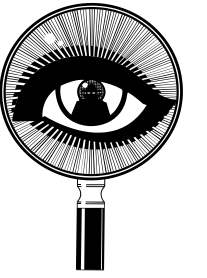
It's time again to plan to help at the fairs. The NHMPA has booths each year at the Hopkinton and Deerfield Fairs and the Eastern States Exposition (the Big E) in West Springfield, MA. Consider spending some time at any or all of these fairs as they are great promotion for the association and the maple industry.

Hopkinton Fair will be held from Aug 30th - Sept 3rd and Deerfield Fair will be held from Sept 27-30th. Contact Don Lassonde at 456-6052 or donlass@aol.com if you are able to help.

The Big E runs from Sept 16-30th this year. Any time you can give to help is much appreciated. A daily stipend is paid and lodging is provided. Contact Dee Linn at 359-1270 or rockytopphoto@yahoo.com to let her know when you'll



Are you prepared for an INSPECTION?



Would your sugar house pass a surprise inspection from the FDA? It should. One sugar maker in New Hampshire had an FDA inspection this spring. Due to good sanitary practices and adherence to proper food safety production standards, he passed with flying colors. Take a look around your sap house. Could you be confident that you would get the same result if an inspector showed up on your doorstep?

Now that the season is over and cleanup is complete, take some time to review your equipment and sugar house to see if it is up to standards or what needs improvement or



replacement. Here are a few things that you want to look for: Are any of your buckets, spiles, or other metal equipment rusty or damaged? Are you repurposing other containers that are intended for single use? (previously used containers

that have had other food or chemicals in them) Does your equipment have lead solder? Do you have a pest issue in your sap house? (insects or rodents) Do you house chemicals or fuel in your sap house? If you are answering yes to any of these questions, you need to make changes or create a plan to remedy these issues as soon as possible. (Continued on back page - Inspection)



Congratulations!

From a lack luster season comes some fantastic news for two of our fellow sugar makers. After meeting at Fuller's Sugar House in Lancaster on the Sunday of Maple Weekend 8 years ago, John Scarinza and Jenn Barton of Randolph were engaged on the Sunday of Maple Weekend this year. Jenn was helping out at Fuller's because she was feeling a bit homesick from not being at her family's sugar house in Loudon. John said, "Why she decided to say hello way back then was beyond me because to be quite honest, I had been in the woods most of the month and didn't look like something you would probably want to catch and take home. Thankfully she overlooked the rough appearance that day." As the evaporator was cooling down, they exchanged "rings"; 1" tubing for him, 3/4" tubing for her (ring followed later). We all wish them a lifetime of happiness and sweet memories for the future!